Bio-terrorism

4097. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "what have you done to tackle bio-terrorism?—HC asks Centre" which appeared in the Indian Express, dated the 15th January, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(c) the corrective steps taken or proposed to be taken against bio-terrorism in view of the Anthrax scare in the USA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has filed an affidavit in the Hon'ble High Court giving the details of the action taken.

(c) The following actions have been taken:—

1. A detailed list of biological agents used as weapons prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research alongwith signs and symptoms, likely method of dissemination, incubation period, lethality and the availability of vaccines, and microbial therapy and treatment has been circulated to Health Secretary and Director of Health Services of all States/UTs, and Central Government hospitals advising them to take precautionary steps.

2. National Institute of Communicable Diseases, 22, Sham Nath Marg, Delhi-110054, an Institute under Directorate General of Health Services has been designated as the nodal agency for carrying out the tests of suspected Anthrax samples. NICD received 393 envelopes suspected of Anthrax and none of them have been tested positive.

3. CD Alert, a monthly Newsletter of National Institute of Communicable Diseases titled "Bioterrorism-Public Health system to Remain Alert" exclusively on Anthrax has been widely circulated. It has also been put in the Website of MOHFW (*http:/mohfw.nic.in)* for information of general public.

4. Do's & Don'ts has been already been published in the leading National Dailies regarding Anthrax.

5. A meeting-cum workshop on Biological & Chemical Terrorism was convened by the Department of Health on 29th October, 2001 in New Delhi. The representatives from the States informed the preparatory measures taken by them and assured availability of drugs in adequate quantity to tackle any situation.

Population control in far-flung areas

4098. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences have developed a unique technology to spread of the message of population control and to solve health problems in far-flung villages of the country;

(b) if so, the main features of the proposed programme;

(c) to what extent it would help in checking the population control; and

(d) by when the scheme is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

National policy for prevention and control of AIDS

4099. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have annouced a National Policy for prevention and control of AIDS and the National Blood Policy for safe use of blood;

(b) if so, whether this policy will help in creating a social environment for providing care and support to HIV-infected people;

(c) if so, the other main features of this policy; and

(d) to what extent it has so far been implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir. The policy has been approved by Government on 02.4.2002.

(b) Yes, Sir.